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ABSTRACT

This document profiles seven exemplary literacy programs in Manitoba, Canada: the Open Doors program in Winnipeg (a community-based program conducted in a school setting); the Brandon Friendship Centre literacy program (a community-based program conducted in a friendship center in rural Manitoba); the Flin Flon Friendship Centre literacy program (a community-based program conducted in a library in northern Manitoba); the Transcona Literacy program (a volunteer program conducted in a community centre in Winnipeg); the Pembina Valley Language Education for Adults program (a community-based program that is presented in multiple centers through the efforts of a coalition of community and government organizations formed to coordinate adult literacy education in the rural Pembina Valley area); the Communication Enhancement Program (a workplace literacy program for workers in the agriculture sector that is sponsored by the United Grain Growers and Manitoba Pool Elevators); and the workplace literacy program offered by the manufacturing company Atlas Graham. Each program profile contains some or all of the following: highlights of the program's 1994-95 project plan, background to the program, elements of good practice and unique features of the program, and a discussion of how the program's development plan reflects its philosophy. (MN)

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EXEMPLARY PRACTICE IN MANITOBA

Models of Quality in Literacy Programming

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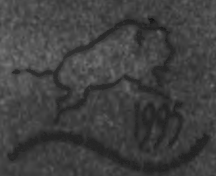

Manitoba Education and Training

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Preface

We are grateful for the collaboration and cooperation of a number of practitioners and authors who helped put this publication together.

Our thanks to the following contributors:

- *Sandi Howell, Agriculture Sector*
- *Angela Tessier, Atlas Graham Industries*
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Introduction to Exemplary Practice in Manitoba

The purpose of this collection is to celebrate the excellence in programming that currently exists in Manitoba. The programs highlighted are by no means the only programs of good quality that exist in Manitoba. However, they are a fair representation of the range of programming that exist in quite different geographical areas.

Each program is unique and contributes in its own way to the development of the principles of Good Practice in Manitoba. In no way should the programs be viewed as being perfect. Because they offer solid programming guided by principles of good practice, they continue to demonstrate growth as evidenced in their Development Plans and enthusiasm for delivery of good adult education.

In order to provide a range of examples for this publication, the staff of the Literacy and Continuing Education branch have selected programs from rural, urban, Northern and workplace settings. Not all program who demonstrate exemplary practice could be included. However, it is hoped that all programs, whether included or not, will use the case studies provided here as models of program development.

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Exemplary Practice: Urban Manitoba

Open Doors

Community-based model in a community school

Highlights of Development Plan 1994/95

Fundraising

Open Doors recognizes that some monies in addition to grants received will have to be raised through campaigns in the community.

Expanding the Working Group

Open Doors has expanded its working group to include representatives from local business, local politicians and students in the program. Volunteers will be used to develop fund raising and publicity projects and to organize computer instruction.

Program Development

A science/math component will be added to the program. New curricula initiatives will integrate portfolio assessment and the new aboriginal curriculum.

Professional Development

Time is allocated so that the instructor, volunteers and aides coordinate work. Professional development funds are budgeted.

Program Description

The Open Doors Adult Literacy program in Winnipeg, Manitoba is based on a model that incorporates a community-based approach in collaboration with the school. This program is in an inner-city area, populated by an ethnically mixed area of aboriginal, immigrant, and working class people. The area is known as the 'North End' and has a long social history of providing residential housing to this population mix. Schools in this area have all the inner-city problems of families in distress due to low incomes and social problems. Many young people drop-out, and parent-school relationships are not always productive.

Some schools in the inner-city have active parent/community groups and also community outreach workers. The Open Doors program arose out of a perceived need by both the community and the school with the impetus for program development arising from the parent council in the school. The Community Education Development (CEDA) worker based in the school had become aware of the low levels of literacy in homes she was visiting. In addition, by informally canvassing these parents, she found there was a high interest in improving their level of education. Thus, the local school and the community expressed interest and enthusiasm for the development of an adult literacy class in their midst.

Elements of Good Practice

Appropriate Instructional Space

Often adult literacy students do not feel comfortable when their program is sited in a school. Too many negative feelings about schooling from part experiences are barriers to learning, and the school setting can intimidate them. So, when the community-school donated a multi-use space near the entrance to the school, there were some concerns about the advisability of the program being sited in the school. However, because the classroom is so accessible to the adult student and does not 'look' like a children's classroom, this potential barrier has been overcome. The program space has room for a coffee machine and an small kitchen space is also available making the space comfortable and inviting for the adult learner.

Support from the Community for the Program

The school supports the initiative because it was felt that the children of parents participating in the program would indirectly benefit from their parents' participation. In-kind contributions from the school and community include: child care space in the school, all classroom facilities and access to photocopying, use of the computers for the evening class.

Strong Instructor

In any adult literacy program, the appointment of a strong instructor is essential to the success of the program. The instructor of Open Doors lives in the community and has had over ten years of experience in teaching adult literacy. She was approached directly by the parent organizing group to teach in the program. Thus, both the school, parent group and the adult students felt comfortable with her. The instructor was excited about the prospect of developing a new model for adult literacy that would incorporate the community's values as well as the values of the school. She understands the needs of adult learners and the community needs as well.

On-going Recruitment Efforts

When the program started, most of the students were parents of children in the school. Since these students had been identified in the early stages of the project, students were easily recruited for the program and the retention rate has been excellent. Some students had family-literacy goals, such as being able to read better to their children, but many had goals that were not specifically parent-child oriented. Some had goals to obtain a General Education Diploma (GED); others had practical skills they wanted to acquire, such as getting a driver's license. Still others wanted to get into the local community college or adult high school in order to further their own education. Although no stipulations have been placed on attendance, parents of children in the school tend to attend during the daytime session. People from the community who do not have any particular association with the school tend to enrol for evening sessions.

Use of Volunteers

The program uses volunteers in a variety of capacities. For example, volunteers act as tutors in both the classroom and tutorial sessions or they may provide teacher support through doing administrative and materials development tasks. Volunteers have a commitment to the program and many have been involved with the program since its inception.

Commitment to Staff Development

The instructor has participated in both Level 2 and the Advanced Certificate in Teaching Literacy to Adults. The program has a commitment to professional development on behalf of both volunteers and paid staff.

Uniqueness of this Program

Open Doors has integrated a community based literacy program in collaboration with the school. The success of the program has been enhanced by several features:

1) It has been critical that the community needs assessment was conducted and students were identified as being interested prior to the beginning of the program. The community identified a need and students were prepared to come to the program. Without the on-going support of the community and continuous recruitment of students, many literacy programs fail. Open Doors has been successful because these factors were taken into consideration when setting up the program.

2) Students do not view the program as being "like school." For a community-based program to succeed when sited in a school, the students and the school must identify the uniqueness of the adult education program. At the same time, teachers feel more at ease with these parents. Teachers understand the nature of the literacy program and its goals and they support the adult education initiative because they feel it is important. Parents participating in the program have not felt ashamed or inhibited because they have literacy needs. The adult students, rather than being embarrassed about their literacy needs, regularly recruit new students to the program.

3) The advantage of the school setting is that students who are parent of children in school now have a better relationship with the school. The children of the students are performing better and attending more regularly. Teachers and administrators reports that the parents involved in the literacy program are more active in their interaction with the school. Parents seem more self-confident, willing to attend parent-teacher conferences, and willing to express their concerns about their children's education. Parents have begun to feel relaxed in the school setting.

How does the Development Plan reflect the philosophy of this program?

The Development Plan reflects the important community role that the Literacy Working Group (LWG) has. The LWG of this program has taken a strong role in supporting and developing the program. The LWG recruits volunteers and sees that it has a fund-raising obligation. Open Doors is a good adult literacy program, but it never takes this for granted. The program is constantly being developed and both the instructor and the LWG are aware of problems that need to be alleviated. Finally, the program supports its volunteers and paid staff through paid release time for regular meetings and professional development. Unless literacy programs receive this support, they will not develop their own learning.

Exemplary Practice : Rural Manitoba

Brandon Friendship Centre

Community-based model in a Friendship Centre

Highlights of Development Plan 1994/95

Fundraising

The Brandon Friendship Centre Literacy program and Literacy Working Group (LWG) are actively involved in fundraising. Realizing fundraising was critical to the program, the LWG recruited a person with fundraising experience to sit on their working group.

Promotion/Outreach

The Adult Upgrading Program at the Friendship Centre maintains a high profile in the community. An extensive waiting list is not unusual. Students are often involved in promoting the program during fundraising events which often take them out into the community. Word-of-mouth is probably the most efficient marketing tool used by this high profile program.

Program Development

An advanced level of literacy delivery will be offered this year to enhance students options upon exiting the program. This program is also integrating portfolio assessment into their curriculum.

Professional Development

The Brandon Friendship Centre has a commitment to staff development. Both instructors regularly participate in training events. The senior instructor provides in-service for Brandon Coalition and Literacy Manitoba events.

Program Description

The Adult Literacy program at the Brandon Friendship Centre, Brandon, Manitoba, is one of the "original" literacy programs in rural Manitoba. Located near the downtown area of the city, the program services a broad cross-section of people - Aboriginal, immigrant, and working class. Many northern students, with families in tow, migrate to Brandon during seasonal employment lay-offs to access this literacy program.

The Adult Literacy Program, celebrating its tenth year of literacy delivery this year, has a well-established student referral base and has developed a fine reputation for service within the community. Its working group and instructional staff readily accept and implement new training ideas in an effort to keep their program innovative. Their senior instructor for that ten-year period, Diane Eastman, was recognized for her exceptional achievement in the field of literacy in 1993 when she was awarded the Lieutenant-Governor' Medal for Literacy.

Elements of Good Practice

Appropriate Instructional Space

The adult literacy classroom space continues to grow at the Brandon Friendship Centre. Strong program advocacy from the instructor has ensured that more classroom space was designated to the literacy program. Recent renovations at the Friendship Centre created an additional small group meeting room adjacent to the existing classroom space, Rural Resource Library, instructor's office and computer room. The program also has benefitted from recent repainting which has brightened up the learning environment and enhanced the relaxed, informal atmosphere.

Support from the Community for the Program

By its very location in the Friendship Centre, students are able to access such programs and services as: Native Cultural Awareness, Native Library Resources, Non-profit housing, Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse program, Adult, Youth and children's social and recreational programs. The Friendship Centre also provides in-kind contributions in the form of secretarial support, photocopying costs, utilities, rent, and student transportation to special events.

Strong Practitioners

It is not unusual to find a skilled, dedicated practitioner as the driving force behind a successful literacy program. The senior instructor at the Friendship Centre has an excellent working relationship with staff and students. She is knowledgeable of the needs of adult learners and the community she serves. She maintains a high profile in the community and is seen as leader among her literacy colleagues as well.

On-going Recruitment Efforts

Not since its initial year of operation has this program publicly recruited students for the literacy program. One reason for this is that they have an extensive waiting list. This suggests that the program has been successful at enabling learners to achieve their goals; otherwise they wouldn't come or they wouldn't stay.

The other significant reason recruitment is unnecessary is that the program has maintained a high profile in the community. The senior instructor, a major driving force during those ten years, has established the program's credibility with social service agencies, post-secondary institutions, and the general public. Members of the Friendship Centre and Literacy Working Group attend numerous inter agency meetings in the course of their work and make valuable contacts with professionals who refer learners to the Friendship Centre's literacy program. Students also promote the program through word-of-mouth. Taking opportunities to network and promote the program just don't happen by chance, it is part of the plan and relationships with the stakeholders are carefully nurtured.

Commitment to Staff Development

Both paid staff members actively participate in Literacy and Continuing Education training events. The senior instructor with her experience and expertise has often facilitated training events for other practitioners in Manitoba. The program values professional development and sees it as an investment that benefits the program and themselves.

Uniqueness of this Program

The Brandon Friendship Centre Adult Literacy Program has integrated a community based literacy program in collaboration with a Friendship Centre. In keeping with the larger organization's mandate, the literacy program works closely with members of the community to develop and implement a program which will produce long-term benefits for all of society. By participating in formal and informal community, citywide, and provincial networks, this program is able to share information, coordinate resources and keep abreast of changing needs. A major part of this program's success has resulted from its willingness to respond to the needs of the learners.

Other positive features of this program which acknowledge good practice are:

1) Successful literacy programs ensure that learners actively participate in the learning process. Through learner-centred assessment, this literacy program continues to be responsive to the community needs. The Friendship Centre program, via the Good Practice Guide, actively implements suggestions made by learners regarding programming. Learners and practitioners collaborate in making decisions about curriculum, fund-raising and program promotion.

   Learners are represented on the Literacy Working Group, and are often actively involved in committees that coordinate and deliver the regional Learners Conference. Recognizing the strengths learners bring to the program has been a key to positive word-of-mouth recruitment.

2) After five years of operation, this program did a major reality check. It received an National Literacy Secretariat grant and set out to survey former learners to find out if the program met their needs. The program, by responding to the information accumulated from this survey, ensured that programming was meeting its learners' needs. This program will continue to successfully serve the needs of its constituents by doing similar checks in the future.

3) This program benefits from a strong spirit of partnership between the Friendship Centre and Literacy Working Group. The Literacy program is seen as one of many services the Friendship Centre provides. The integrity of the literacy program and its innovativeness promotes the Centre very positively in the community. In turn, the Friendship Centre recognizes the need of literacy programming for its constituents and makes every effort to provide adequate space and supports for this program.

4) The Brandon Friendship Centre Literacy Program uses learner-centred instructional strategies, building curriculum in response to identified learner and community interests and concerns. As a result, learners and instructors have collaborated to develop student-generated material such as Words of Art, Stories - From Our Hearts to Your Minds, and The Spirit Sands Project.

How does the Development Plan reflect the philosophy of this program?

The Development Plan reflects that this literacy program, from Literacy Working Group members to learners, takes responsibility for the long-term development of this program in relation to the community it is a part of. The Friendship Centre staff and the Literacy Working Group both reinforce commitment to improving program quality by providing instructional staff with resources, time and encouragement to participate in program improvement efforts. Without this support, programs cannot respond to the changing needs of its clients.

Exemplary Practice: Northern Manitoba

Flin Flon Adult Learning Centre

Community-based model in a library

Highlights of Development Plan 1994/95

Appropriate Space

Due to program expansion and growth, the program is looking for a larger space. Additional monies will be needed to be sought in order to get the space, furniture and supplies should a move be necessary.

Promotion/Outreach

Publicity activities have included advertisements in newspapers and on television. Promotion will continue and expand in the coming year to include presentations to several service organizations.

Program Development

Students will receive opportunities for computer instruction as well as the range of learning opportunities currently offered.

Professional Development

The instructor is committed to professional development. Due to the long distances to travel, regular attendance at provincial training events is difficult. Flin Flon is interested in developing some distance education training events in collaboration with the Literacy and Continuing Education staff.

Program Description

The Flin Flon Community Adult Learning Centre began in 1992 with a small grant. The program is situated in the community public library and receives in-kind contributions of space, photocopying and telephone. The program began through the initiatives of a lively volunteer Working Group. This group was active in recruiting students, promoting the program, and providing fund raising assistance.

Flin Flon is a remote, mining town located in northern Manitoba. Students participating in the program come from surrounding communities as well as the town itself. The student population is comprised of both Aboriginal and non-Native students.

The program has developed close ties with the community schools. Learning plans are often integrated between the library program and the school division. Students can attain credit for their participation in the literacy program towards grade completion or a high school diploma. The program also acts as a "feeder" program for an alternative high school offered by the school division.

Elements of Good Practice

Appropriate Instructional Space

Because the program is sited in the community library, adults feel comfortable coming to a learning program in that space. Although the classroom space is small, the use of the room has been maximized. The setting is adult with appropriate furniture and surroundings. The Space includes storage of materials, a resource collection, and computer stations. The library is especially useful when helping students select interesting books!

Support from the Community for the Program

The active participation of volunteers from the community has made this program a success. Volunteers are active as one-to-one tutors working in the library or assisting with group instruction in collaboration with the instructor/coordinator. Even more importantly volunteers have actively been involved in fund raising and program promotion. They have been instrumental in gaining other sources of funding to enable the program to purchase computers and software.

Strong Instructor

The instructor of the Flin Flon program is imaginative and innovative. She has developed a range of learning materials and utilizes various approaches with her students. The instructor is an enthusiastic participant in training events and has completed the Advanced Certificate in Teaching Literacy to Adults.

Program Development

The program has expanded from a one-to-one tutoring program to include group instruction, GED preparation and English as A Second Language instruction. The program would like to offer specific support for students with learning disabilities.

Uniqueness of this Program

Flin Flon Adult Learning Centre has developed an exciting integrated literacy program in a northern community. The library provided the initial thrust for the program development, but the school and volunteers in the community have continued to help the program expand and develop. This program is unique for the following reasons:

1) The community is strongly involved in the program. In spite of being acknowledged as a success, promotion and outreach of the program continues on a regular basis. Volunteers are active on the Working Group, as tutors in the program and in promotion, recruitment and fund raising. Without this kind of support, a small community program cannot survive.

2) The program is totally articulated with the local school division. Students at the literacy program can attain credit towards high school diplomas or other school initiatives. Literacy provision is imaginative and varied. Students can access one-to-one tutoring and/or group instruction on a sessional basis during the day or evening. They have a number of ways to get acknowledgement of their progress. The arrangement with the school division allow students flexibility in terms of instructional methods, setting and time of classes in order to maximize learning.

How does the Development Plan reflect the philosophy of this program?

The Development Plan reflects the important community role that volunteers plan in the operation of this program. The program is truly a reflection of the enthusiasm and commitment that volunteers play in the development of good literacy programming. The Development Plan reflects the realities that good programs need to continue to publicize themselves.

The current realities of a changing technological society are reflected in the focus on program expansion in both training for the practitioners and teaching for the students. In the future, especially remote communities will be provided with learning opportunities through a range of distance education options. Literacy programs must access these initiatives both for instructors and students.

Exemplary Practice: Urban, Manitoba

Transcona Literacy Centre

Volunteer model based in a community centre

Highlights of Development Plan 1994/95

Expanding Student Group-Work

Transcona volunteers usually work one-to-one, but many student welcome the chance to work collaboratively with one another. The current student group plans to meet on a regular basis in order to write and produce a skit for presentation at program gatherings.

Expanding the Use of Volunteers

Transcona hopes to recruit volunteers to run the Book Discussion Club and the Drama Club. In this way, volunteers can get experience in small group work and students can get increased learning opportunities.

Staff Development

Experienced volunteers will receive additional training provided by the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch. This year tutors are interested in 'Stages of Learning' and 'Building a Spelling Curriculum'. A number of volunteers are also interested in working on computers with students.

Development of the Working Group

Recruitment of a separate working group from Winnipeg Volunteer Reading Aides will be investigated.

Program Description

Transcona Literacy Program began in 1990 as an out-growth of the volunteer program, Winnipeg Volunteer Reading Aides. Since that time the Working Group has supported both programs. Transcona is a section of Winnipeg in the eastern part of the city which used to be primarily identified with the rail road industry. Thus, it has a local community feeling and the program has a strong community identity. The program has a part-time coordinator who is responsible for volunteer recruitment, training and management as well as matching perspective students with the appropriate tutor.

The program is located in a small strip mall on the main street of Transcona. The centre includes a small library for use of individual tutors and students, the coordinator's office and a kitchen/reading room. Although many tutor/student pairs work together outside of the centre in homes or other convenient sites, they are also welcome to work in the centre.

Elements of Good Practice

Commitment to Tutor Development

Many volunteer literacy programs struggle because of the turnover in volunteer tutors. Transcona has been able to maintain a core of tutors over a number of years. These tutors are increasing their expertise through a range of professional development activities which include Laubach training, courses offered through the Literacy and Continuing Education branch and annual literacy conferences. Celebratory events are a regular part of the program's schedule so that the efforts of volunteers are recognized appropriately.

Strong Coordinator

The coordinator has demonstrated energy and initiative in terms of program development, learner involvement in the program and community support. She has developed adult learning games which tutors and students can play to reinforce specific skills; she has initiated materials development projects which involve students, and she has promoted a learner-run 'association'.

The coordinator meets regularly with both tutors and students to assess progress, learning goals and to help identify learning activities appropriate for the student's situation.

Both tutors and students highly respect her capabilities and are able to use her recommendations to set new goals and objectives.

Program Development

Although many student prefer instruction to be one-to-one, others would like opportunities to work collaboratively. Transcona has broadened the one-to-one concept and has offered short courses for learners on essay writing and specific skill development. In addition, the program continues to offer small group learning opportunities through the Book Club and the Drama club.

Uniqueness of this Program

1) Transcona Literacy Program has managed to keep a highly accessible space convenient to tutors and students in the Transcona area. Although the program is not a 'drop-in' centre, it is open one evening a week so that individual tutors and/or students can use the library, meet with the coordinator or organize social events.

2) The program has expanded the concept of a traditional volunteer model. The development of student groups, small group instruction and delivery of short courses has provided a program with greater opportunities and depth than a on-to-one tutor can possible do.

3) Although the majority of volunteers are tutors, members of the local community have contributed to the program on a one-off basis by speaking to groups of students. This regular support of the community has led to greater demands on the resources of the program.

How does the Development Plan reflect the philosophy of this program?

The Development Plan demonstrates the on-going commitment of this program to the volunteer model. It indicates the expanded use of volunteers in a range of roles, not just tutoring students. The strong commitment to professional development for volunteers demonstrates the program's awareness that volunteers need to be celebrated and helped as much as students do!

At the same time the program has demonstrated the range of opportunities that both tutors and student need from the expansion of the library facilities to the development of groups for interested students. It is remarkable that a part-time literacy program is able to offer the range of learning opportunities that it does.

Exemplary Practice: Rural Manitoba

Pembina Valley Language Education for Adults (PVLEA)

Community-based model in a rural region
Program with multi centres

Highlights of Development Plan 1994/95

Increased Hours of Instruction

PVLEA is responding to the request of learners for more class time. The implications for increased instructional costs and child care costs were reflected in the budget.

Increased Access to Computers by Learners

PVLEA has negotiated with two of the participating school divisions for access to the Columbia Learning System. Funds were allocated for the training of staff and volunteers.

Professional Development

The Literacy Stages and Certificates were introduced in 1993/94 and will be enhanced this year with additional professional development provided by Literacy and Continuing Education staff.

Community Outreach and Publicity

PVLEA is committed to an ongoing recruitment strategy for learners and volunteers. Fund raising activities and a community celebration of learning are also part of the plan.

Program Description

The process which produced the Pembina Valley Language/Education for Adults (PVLEA) committee began in 1984. The Winkler Resource Committee came together to address the settlement and education needs of Mennonite people of Canadian parentage, the Kanadier, who were returning to Canada from South and Central America. PVLEA now meets a range of education, literacy and ESL needs in the region. Literacy work now aids recent immigrants of Russian, Chinese, Lebanese, Spanish, French, Laotian and Vietnamese background, the Kanadier, as well as Canadian born adults with insufficient literacy levels.

PVLEA is a unique coalition of community and government organizations created to coordinate adult literacy education in the area. PVLEA's board is drawn from a broad community base and includes local representatives from Garden Valley, Rhineland, Morris-MacDonald and Western School Divisions; community groups such as the Mennonite Central Committee, Eden Mental Health Services, regional representatives of Red River Community College, Morden College and Manitoba Education and Training - Distance Delivery Unit; and the Pembina Valley Development Corporation. There is ongoing support and participation by government groups such as Human Resources Canada (Morden Canada Employment Centre); Literacy and Continuing Education Branch; Settlement and Adult Language Training Branch of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship; and on a number of occasions, support from the National Literacy Secretariat.

There has been intensive cooperation between local community-based groups, and both provincial and federal government departments. PVLEA has devised innovate ways to consolidate funding from both federal and provincial sources to provide a range of program supports to learners in the region.

Program resources are shared among part-time and full-time literacy and ESL classes, workplace language training programs and family literacy programs. A resource centre (located in the Pembina Valley Learning Centre (PVLC) of Winkler, a full-time literacy program) serves <u>all</u> programs and instructors in the region.

Programming is being delivered during the day and evening in the communities of Altona, Morris, and Winkler this year. Programming also has been offered in Morden, Lowe Farm and Plum Coulee in past years. Churches, community halls and schools are used for classes.

Elements of Good Practice

On-going Needs Assessments

PVLEA is committed to ensuring that appropriate and quality learning opportunities are made available to adults in the region. A comprehensive needs assessment study was conducted amongst learners and employers in late 1989 to determine the overall adult learning needs in the region. A similar study is underway to review current needs. Community counterparts, located in each community and working in conjunction with the PVLEA Program Coordinator, have provided an invaluable service to learners. The counterparts are involved in recruitment and support of learners. They communicate with non-confident learners in their own language. Once at the class, learners are encouraged to make decisions about their programs, and the counterparts seek ways to enable learners to continue with their studies. Counterparts have arranged high quality care for children of learners. PVLEA child care arrangements have a positive impact on the attitudes and skills of the pre-schoolers.

Program Committed to Learner-Centred Education

The learner-centred instructional approach has a powerful impact on learning in the PVLEA area. The programs are structured around the stated needs and goals of the learners, following individual assessment of learner needs. Learners are grouped as much as possible on the basis of the assessments. All educators involved in the program advocate a holistic concept of learning. Classes are comfortable and accepting of students. Hard work is encouraged. Successes are celebrated. Learners are valued and respected. Educators and learners alike are perceived as both "learners" and "teachers". Peer coaching is very much encouraged.

Learners experience the satisfaction of publishing their own writings, taking part in recognition ceremonies, and helping with publicity events in local malls. As learners achieve success and gain confidence, they want to share their learning experiences. Others in the community are encouraged to imitate the successes of PVLEA students.

As a result of participation in the program, learners feel empowered to help themselves. Their increased self-esteem is benefitting their families. Local public school educators report that because learning is held in high regard by the parents, children are experiencing increased success at school. Parents who have used computers encourage their children to do the same. Family literacy participants, referred by local schools, have become avid library users. Some learners have been able to further their education at technical school or university. More and more learners are making pleas for high levels of training. The program planning continues to address the literacy needs identified each year through the needs assessment process, as well as striving to meet these new needs!

Commitment to Professional Development

Professional development is an important support to all programs. In addition to financial assistance to instructors, PVLEA provides a number of development opportunities in the region, utilizing local resource persons and others from sources such as the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch. The Program Coordinator provides teacher support through classroom visits and sharing of knowledge and experience.

In an effort to evaluate and improve its programs, PVLEA attempts to track the activities of learners who leave programs, for whatever reason. Learners have experienced increased employability and a wide range of personal successes. Learners are actively engaged in program evaluation and contribute significantly to the Development Plan each year.

Uniqueness of this Program

PVLEA is an outstanding example of cooperation, effective management, innovative funding arrangements and sound instructional philosophy - all elements of exemplary practice. PVLEA's efforts have had a profound impact on the personal goals, the employment opportunities, the educational goals and the quality of life of its participants.

PVLEA is taking a leadership role in the development of literacy provision. The links between part-time programming, full-time programming and workplace programs are strong and provide the community of learners and employers with a "seamless system" of adult education within the region. Many people from outside the area have visited PVLEA meetings and projects. The PVLEA organization and innovative ideas have become models for other parts of Manitoba.

In 1991, PVLEA was the recipient of the "Celebrate Literacy" award presented jointly by the International Reading Association and the local La Verendrye Reading Council. The inscription on the award states: "For exemplary service in the promotion of literacy".

How does the Development Plan reflect the philosophy of this program?

The Development Plan reflects the input of all of the stakeholders and identifies priorities for the next year based upon this input. Based upon learner feedback, the number of hours of instruction increased this year; access to computers for more learners was implemented; and an increased emphasis on community outreach and publicity has taken place.

The Development Plan provided a focal point for the PVLEA committee to develop the 1994/95 programs and to priorize its available funding. As an annual and ongoing exercise, the committee continues to ensure that programming is learner-centred and that learners and staff receive the support that is required to result in quality learning!

Exemplary Practice: Workplace Education

Agriculture Sector: Communication Enhancement Program

Project Plan

Early in 1992, United Grain Growers and Manitoba Pool Elevators, two competing Manitoba grain companies, formed a partnership for the purpose of examining the literacy and numeracy needs of their rural grain elevator operators and the potential of delivering a communications enhancement program in the rural areas.

UGG and MP felt that the grain industry was undergoing a number of major changes related to technological advances in the industry as well as organizational changes within each company. They felt that the grain elevator workforce was not equipped with the necessary basic skills to meet the challenges presented by these types of changes.

Background to the Program

The Agriculture Sector Project, called *Communication Enhancement,* provides a good example of how the factors commonly identified as being important to workplace programs can work. These factors include:

- ✔ Determining the stakeholders in the process and including them throughout the process.
- ✔ Creating a program which is tailored to the needs of the workplace, including the content of the class materials.
- ✔ While predetermining that certain curriculum elements are required based on initial needs assessments and stakeholder goals, remaining open to ongoing change in the program based on the needs of the participants.

Workplace programs characteristically begin for several reasons: there is a present worksite issue related to basic skills functioning or future change will necessitate a new set or application of basic skills. Successfully running a program requires the analysis of many aspects of a worksite, along with initial and ongoing planning which involves all interested stakeholders.

Elements of Good Practice

The project was delineated into four distinct parts:

- *Part One* - Information Sessions, Organizational Needs Assessment and Planning,
- *Part Two* - Curriculum Development,
- *Part Three* - Course Delivery: Quality of Instructor
- *Part Four* - Feedback, Evaluation and Revision.

Part One: Management, union and employees were educated as to the program potential through information sessions which were conducted at a number of different worksites over several months. The supervisors in each district then invited willing employees to be interviewed about their training needs. An Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA) was conducted individually with over 100 employees, including management, at several centralized rural sites. An ONA traditionally results in information about basic skill needs and wants, priorities, changes in the workplace and content area interests.

Part Two: This project also had a component which allowed a curriculum development specialist to create curriculum materials which were wholly in the language of the workplace. The curriculum consultant visited a grain elevator and did a Literacy Task Analysis (LTA) of the workplace functions. An LTA is a process wherein each job function is analyzed according to the basic skills required to do the job. For example, the function of report writing requires the skills of sentence writing, paragraph writing, rhetoric, presentation according to function such as persuasion, spelling, punctuation and company format.

The chosen content material reflects the interest and concerns of the students. Content areas such as grading, marketing, chemicals, weed types, weed resistance, crop disease, GRIP, GATT, seed quality, new crops and processes such as herbicide use served as the basis for learning the literacy task. This type of content area allowed students to bring their expertise to the classroom and was highly motivational. It was used as the focus for the initial lessons in the hope that indeed it would be motivational for the students to practise literacy skills using these content areas.

Part Three: Instructors were picked that would espouse the best of adult education practices. It is critical that learners in workplace programs are recognized as being capable adults who bring a wealth of valuable experience into the classroom. It is the instructor's job to structure as much of the class as possible based on the learners' competencies and to build from there. Given the locations and time factors, the classes were delivered once a week for five hours each (lunch and breaks included), plus a three-hour home study component. The course was ten classes over a ten-week period, totalling 80 hours of delivery.

Part Four: An important part of this process was the ongoing evaluation and revision of the course. The initial curriculum was meant to serve as a guide for the teacher as to learning requirements and as a resource for learning materials. Part of the teacher's job was to ensure that it was appropriate to the students and to remain responsive to previously unidentified needs from the students and employers. At the end of each class, the instructor asked for specific feedback from the students. This allowed them to better decide each class's direction and to provide feedback to the other stakeholders. The end product is a curriculum which reflects initial predictions and desires in concert with ongoing realities. This type of ongoing evaluation is an integral part of a successful program.

Uniqueness of this Program

The Agriculture Sector program is particularly unique because:

a) The collaboration between employers, unions, employees, educators and government made the ultimate success of the program one that all partners could celebrate. The process of inquiry, reflection, cooperation, negotiation and planning is one of the reasons that this workplace program was so successful. Although this project was fairly extensive in terms of the numbers involved and the scope of activities, other workplace initiatives are less extensive as suits the characteristics of the workplace.

b) The curriculum design took all the needs of the partners into consideration. In designing a curriculum, we attempt to wed the students' wants, the employers' needs and the expertise of the practitioners. The result was a plan of action interlaced with reflection and evaluation. The course was designed to be responsive to the various levels of student ability and the ongoing requests of the students and employer. The content of the lessons revolved around the language and functioning of the workplace. The aim is not to instruct in workplace information, procedures and policy, but to use this content as the axis around which to rotate the learning of literacy skills.

c) The quality of the instructor ensured the appropriate implementation of the curriculum. The instruction was designed to meet the needs of the individual students and the companies. While the curriculum and instructor remained responsive to all the partners' needs, there was a constancy of workplace-related content and classroom materials. The content of the course involved all the learned components, from good sentence writing and spelling to report writing, including charts/graphs and concluding with oral presentations on the reports using visual materials.

How did this program reflect the Project Plan?

A formal evaluation was done at the end of the program. Each partner: employers, employee/students, instructors, government representative, did an evaluation based on their own needs and indicators of success. Since criteria for success had been identified early in the planning stage, a straightforward evaluation could determine whether these goals had been met. All partners were satisfied that the goals of both the program and the individual students had been met.

The program was considered such a success that the Grain industry has both expanded the availability of the program and increased their own financial commitment to it.

Exemplary Practice: Workplace Education

Manufacturing Sector: Atlas Graham, Winnipeg

Highlights of Project Plan 1994/95

Curricula Developed in Collaboration

New reading and writing goals will be set in collaboration with the students which are applicable to the workplace setting.

Students will Organize a Trip to Ottawa

Students are planning a trip to Ottawa to visit the House of Parliament. They will organize, fund raise, and plan the details of the trip.

Program Development

Reading and writing development will focus on reading comprehension strategies and the development of improved writing for the workplace. Some students will work on individualized mathematics.

Background to the Program

Atlas Graham is a small manufacturing company which makes brooms and brushes in Winnipeg. Its goals for establishing a basic education workplace program were to facilitate communication in the workplace. The program is now in its third year. The employer has a supportive view of a learner-centred language and literacy program. Basic education in the workplace programming is a collaboration between management, employees, and government. In general, management provides facilities for instruction and release time for one half of the instructional period. Students who participate in the program provide half of their own time for the instructional period. Government provides funding to pay the instructors' salary.

Each year the length of the program has been collaboratively decided. In 1994-95 it will run for 25 weeks (four hours per week) for a total of 100 hours.

Elements of Good Practice in Workplace Education

Employer Support for the Program

The management of this company has a broad view of educational programming for its workers. Any initiatives which the students themselves view as being helpful to their language and literacy development are viewed positively. An initial needs assessment is conducted yearly to determine any specific goals for both management and the individual students. Management has also supported the student goals which include a trip to Ottawa in the spring of 1995.

Educational Planning and Goal Setting

The partners which include management, government coordinators of Basic Education in the Workplace and the students themselves determine the goals and the measurable outcomes of the program. All agree early in the year what will be the criteria for evaluation. In this case supervisors are consulted as well as the instructor and the coordinator of Basic Education in the Workplace.

In the initial phase of this program, a group consensus determined the curriculum and content of the lessons. After the first year, more individual needs emerged and although the group continues to work together, small group work and individual assignments play a larger role in determining the learning programs.

Appropriate Facilities

Quality facilities available on-site are important to the success of a basic education program in the workplace. The facilities at Atlas Graham are bright and clean and available on a consistent basis. This is a subtle but important indicator to program participants about how management feels about the program. The quality of the facilities indicates that the program is being respected and valued.

Learner Involvement in Program Planning

Workplace programs will not be successful if students are coerced into attending. Employees themselves must decide if the learning program is appropriate for them. At Atlas Graham, students are given the opportunity to attend but do so entirely voluntarily. By the same token, students are expected to give their own time to the program. Therefore, voluntary participation is an important component to the success of the program.

One of the major reasons for the success of this program is the enthusiasm that the students have for the learning . Content of the learning includes activities specific to the workplace (such as filling out forms) but it also includes specific goals that each student has identified. As the program has developed, the students became involved in promoting basic education and decided they wanted to visit the Houses of Parliament. They have developed fund raising activities such as making and selling pirogues during Christmas so that they all can go on this trip.

Strong Instructor

The instructor is an individual with a strong adult basic education background. She has an imaginative attitude to instructional possibilities, is dedicated to the principles of learner-centred instruction, but also works well with groups of students. The instructor has shown she can develop learning programs that are meaningful both the participating students and that are related to the specific and group goals of the students.

Uniqueness of this Program

This program is particularly unique for the following reasons:

1) Senior management has been supportive of the development of diverse and individualized learning. As well, supervisors realize that participants may be away from the production line at times that are not necessarily convenient. The senior management representative is committed to the concept of adult education and involved in on-going issues surrounding program development.

2) The program has evolved from a workplace focused/group model to one in which not the curriculum is developed by accommodating both the individual needs of specific students and the wider workplace goals as expressed by management. The broad definition of 'literacy' has also helped to promote program growth.

3) Program evaluations have indicated that participants notice increase of literacy skills has impacted on their improved self-confidence and self-esteem. Participants also indicate a greater interaction in their daily lives with civic awareness and media awareness. The employer has indicated that the program has given participants improved skills but also a greater sense of company loyalty.